

OPINION

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My Lamp Is Lit
So That
Others Can See



At eventide on a lonely road, returning after a hard day's work, a blind man met a stranger who laughingly asked: "Does a blind man need light?" "Yes," replied the blind man, "my lamp is lit so that others can see."

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	1969-70	1970-71
Sales & Direct Sales Compensation	25.43	2
Investment income (net)	116.55	
Profit before tax provision	64.30	
Profit after tax provision	420.92	
Shareholders' Funds	440.83	
Borrowings	861.7	
Total capital employed	135	
Emoluments to employees	30	
Proposed Dividends		3
Number of Shareholders at year end		3

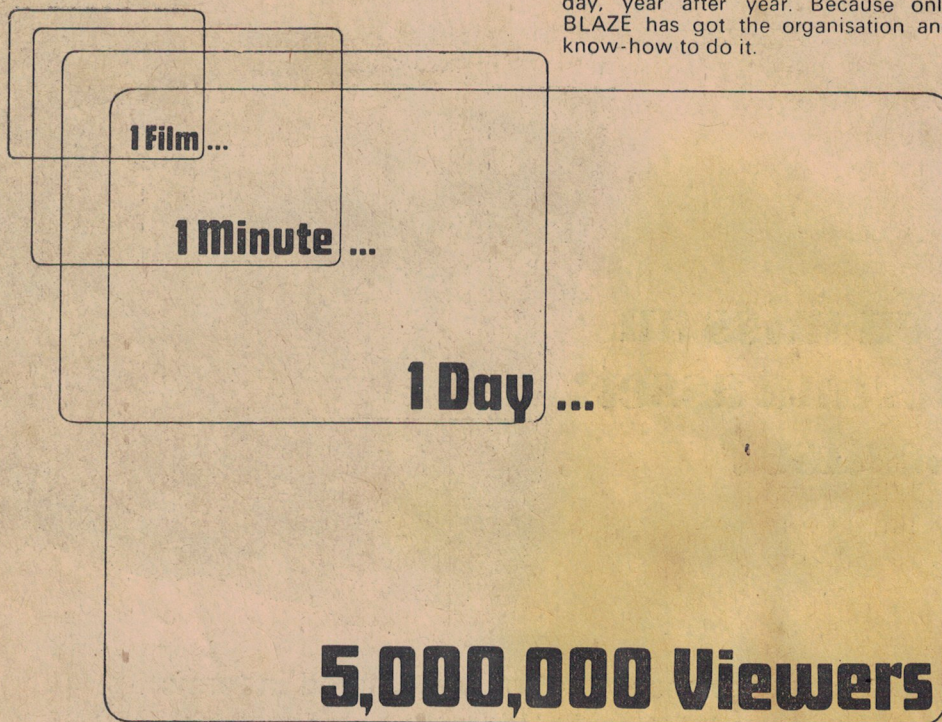
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INDIRIANA

IT should by now be clear even to the uninitiated that Indiraji and her Indicate are fighting the election not on principle or policy but purely on personality. They have simplified the whole contest to 'Indira—For or Against?' Give Indira your vote and trust her, is their demand. 'What will she do when she's won, you'd like to know in detail. The Manifesto's rather vague? Yes, yes, but you know it's just the general line. Trust her and all will be well.' Meanwhile of course she talks in different tones to different audiences. On the whole then it may be best to consider her as she displayed herself in the pre-election years. Indiriana is naturally not altogether lacking in past issues of *Opinion*. Let us examine just a few items.

PRITHEE, PRIME MINISTER

Will you tell us true?
Have we ample plenty?
Are we simple poor?

There seems to be considerable confusion about the economic standing of India in the minds of the Members of the Central Cabinet, "all persons of great ability, patriotism, and dedication to the service of the country," according to a recent very compassionate view. For years the Central Cabinet has been out and around all over the world, begging-bowl in hand, urging that India is a very poor, a truly underdeveloped country, with the lowest per capita income even in Asia, prostrated for two years in succession by natural disasters that made very bad conditions worse for the mass of the people; and therefore not only deserves but insists on all the help developed countries ought to give. Briefly, "help, help, help, help for our sake, help even more for your own sake. Grants, loans on easy terms, extended interest-payment facilities on loans already taken, foreign exchange loans, rupee-payment loans, collaboration, technical know-how, anything and everything, you give, we take, for our benefit, for your benefit, for mutual benefit, for the benefit of the world and humanity itself." Thus has the Central Cabinet through some at least of its members and many of its agents and officials asked, cajoled, lectured, warned in many a capital and many an international gathering. Thus it has firmly fixed in its own mind that India is poor.

That is also the strong impression it conveys to its own people. It says to them "give, give, give, you are poor but if you do not give to us, how can we build the country up so that you may be less poor?" So high direct taxes on the better-off, high indirect taxes on all, affecting

even the most indigent, continuous urging to lend to Government, through loans, small-savings, life-insurance, and unit trust schemes, and now inducements to give through lotteries. On the point of the real deep poverty of the country, the Central Cabinet then, have no doubt at all.

But the Central Cabinet decides to build a new house for the Prime Minister at a cost of twenty-five lakhs. A quarter of a crore may be a bagatelle to the government of a rich country, but to that of a poor country it cannot but be a very appreciable amount. Perhaps then, the members of the Central Cabinet are not sure after all that India is a poor country. In the matter of the provision of accommodation for the Prime Minister, India suddenly appears to them in the guise of a very rich, extremely prosperous land. What after all could they do with a mere quarter-crore? Give a half-crore of the fifth of our people who hardly ever have two meals a day, a good extra meal; build 825 wells each of which would irrigate 10 acres of land and produce two to three crops a year; make available a secure water supply to at least 250 villages; and many other piddling projects of a like nature, which no important people at least would bother about. Better by far to build the Prime Minister a gracious abode in consonance with her dignity, where she could live in luxury, entertain at ease, win golden opinions for her superb hospitality, be the cynosure of visitors' eyes from all over the globe. "We may be—no, are—poor, but in this we shall be rich," says the Central Cabinet in effect, presided over of course by the Prime Minister herself, no less.

The total disregard of financial ethics in this proposal would have caused it to be opposed at a very early stage by any Finance Ministry and Finance Minister, who had some conception of their duty. With a Finance Minister who, because of his own gross misdeeds, owes his continuance entirely to the Prime Minister's forbearance, objection naturally went by the board, the Finance Minister, and perhaps even more the abashed Secretary in charge of sanction of expenditure, contenting themselves with asking "Oh Conscience, where is Thy Sting? Oh Financial Propriety, where is Thy Victory?" Obviously nowhere, when Finance blinds itself and will not see.

Perhaps, some stranger to Delhi may urge, the Prime Minister has no house to live in. Perhaps, like the Moghuls, she is always in camp, a shamiana her drawing-room, a Swiss Cottage tent her bed-room. Now after three years of distinguished service to the nation, if she desires a little domesticity in a permanent residence, only the black-hearted and stony-willed could object. Or perhaps in the whole of Delhi with its many many government-owned residences, none is suitable for her, and so, to build. Neither of which apologies, of course, can be sustained.

There is not, in fact, the least reason for spending anything at all on a new house for the Prime Minister. She should be very well-suited in the fine house in which she is, and which was preferred to the former Prime Minister's residence. In any case, what kind of minds are these

that want a quarter-crore of a very poor country's money, which could be spent with far greater advantage to the public good in many other ways, to be devoted to the provision of even more luxurious living for those already settled in considerable comfort? Here are people who talk day in and day out of social justice, egalitarianism, democratic socialism, Gandhian ideals, austerity, simplicity, trusteeship, and planning to reduce inequalities. They are never tired of demanding sacrifice for the country from even the most hard-pressed. And this is their idea of the public interest, a finer mansion for their chief! How utterly patriotic, how totally dedicated to the public good!!

The Prime Minister has recently been compared by a British journalist to Queen Elizabeth the First of England. Very gratifying, of course, both to her, and her fellow-citizens here. She would, however, do well to remember that the Gloriana aspect of the great Elizabeth was on account not of her cloth of gold, palaces, jewels, and entertainments but because of her spirit, the inspiration she gave her people, her defence of her realm against all enemies, her magnificent victories, her fine scholarship and deep learning. (4-2-1969)

* * * *

THE DEVIL LAUGHS

Poor oppressed Mrs. Gandhi! Even the hardest heart must be moved by her plight! She is indeed deserving of the utmost sympathy! Here she is, "living exceedingly happily in a small house", she says, "But this had caused inconvenience to many people who came to see me". So, self-sacrificing as she is and always concerned about the good of other people, even to the extent of not letting visitors suffer the least inconvenience, she is, in their interest entirely, compelling herself to give up her exceeding happiness in her small house, and reluctantly preparing to build and move into a very large residence estimated to cost the public the very small sum of twenty-five lakhs of rupees. A significantly noble exhibition of public spirit! No wonder members of her own and many other political parties encouraged her whole-heartedly, as she tells us they did, in this, obviously to them and to her, very worthwhile project.

Good Mrs. Gandhi, your exceeding happiness is a most valuable asset to the people of India, and they would indeed be extremely loath to have it disturbed. So be firm-minded, even hard-hearted, in preserving it. Let your future visitors rather bear such inconveniences as your past visitors have no doubt borne in the last three years without, so far as anyone is aware, suffering too terribly in body or mind, and you continue "exceedingly happily" in your small house. Living there you may even at some time come to understand that though hypocrisy is the tribute vice pays to virtue, it need not be paid if you refrain from vice. What a relief it will be to you to realise that, for surely you will agree that "Of all the cants that are canted in this canting world, the cant of

the hypocrite is the worst". And pray consider also that, "if the devil ever laughs, it must be at hypocrites; they are the greatest dupes he has; they serve him better than any others but receive no wages; nay, what is still more extraordinary, they submit to greater mortifications to go to hell than the sincerest saint to go to heaven."

* * * *

THE PEOPLE'S CAR, SON AND MAMMA

The small car incident is a typical example of two characteristic attitudes of the present government: its total indifference to the wasteful use of scarce resources and its 'by hook or by crook I'll get my way' obsession.

The people's car, the low cost car, who is going to use it? He who can spend at least ten thousand rupees for it. In other words a member of the upper middle class. No working man, no lower middle class man can possibly afford it. A strange 'folk's wagon' this, which the real folk will never be able to use! It is difficult to see any justification at all for the quite large expenditure that will have to be incurred. The same amount devoted to the improvement of public transport, to providing more buses, would serve the mass of the people infinitely better. Is this not known to the Government of India and its head, Mrs. Gandhi? Of course it is. This small car business has been discussed *ad nauseam* in the past, and turned down after the fullest consideration. The Planning Commission rejected it. No person with a grain of sense could, if disinterested, possibly support it. It is unnecessary, wasteful, and a clearly wrong use of public resources.

But Mrs. Gandhi's son had worked out a small car model and he wanted to make it and sell it in large numbers. And how could he if Mamma was not prepared to permit small cars? So after much humming and hawing and hesitating, and with several of Mamma's Ministers urging what they well knew Mamma wanted to be urged, forward the small car, plans of collaboration with foreigners to be considered. And also, purely as a side-issue of course, licenses to be issued for manufacture from Indian components to deserving candidates. Who more deserving naturally than Mamma's son? The license to him has not yet been issued, Mamma tells us, but goes on to plead son's cause so eloquently that even a very hard-hearted licensing board would immediately be moved to tears and agreement. Son's delicate constitution, pioneering spirit, the merits of the model made, nothing is left out by fond Mamma. And the crowning stroke "If he is not encouraged, how can I ask other young men to take risks?" Moral: Where there's a will there's a way and you can trust Mrs. Gandhi to find it, in the interests of those she cherishes, even if these are diametrically opposed to those of the country.

* * * *

THE MURDER OF A NATION

The Indian citizen has good reason to feel ashamed today. The Government of his sovereign, independent, republican, democratic country *dare not*,—yes, note the words—*dare not* condemn the Murder of a small fellow-nation, independent, sovereign, attempting after a long period of oppression to move towards giving its people the ordinary, normal freedoms of a democratic state. It dare not say to the Communist Rulers of the Soviet Union 'You brutal ruthless murderers, we abhor and condemn you'. That strange combination of foolishness and obstinacy that is the Government of India will venture out on what is obviously considered by it very dangerous ground only so far as to 'deplore' the Murder. To condemn it or its doers,—oh no, no, no, do think a little, consider our own interests, remember how tightly we are in the Soviet grip, what will happen if they cut off military supplies! Such is the thinking of the great Government of India, disguised under its usual veil of hypocrisy; it is all of course in the interests of the country murdered, of free Czechoslovakia free no longer, that we 'deplore' the Murder but do not condemn it. Tears we are prepared to shed by the bucket, but beyond that we must not go one milimetre. . . .

This ghastly Murder should be convincing proof even to the hitherto sceptical of the truth of what *Opinion* has always maintained: The Communist Soviet Union remains today essentially what it was under Lenin and Stalin, a tyrannical, dictatorial totalitarianism that is a living and present danger to freedom everywhere in the world. Its missionaries are continuously at work, sapping and mining the foundations of freedom in countries outside its sway. To let it get too close, to allow it intervention in economic, military or political life is to jeopardise the country's safety and independence.

On the utterly false excuse of danger to socialism, the Soviet government did not hesitate to pour suddenly troops and tanks into a country allied to it, a country which had scrupulously fulfilled all its obligations under the alliance and which had even recently declared its full adherence to the alliance. This is its behaviour to a proved ally; what then would it not be capable of to any other country that for any reason excited its ire? In the finding of excuses to do what it wants to do, in propaganda in support of what it wants to do, it has no rivals, as those who have listened to its broadcasts in English can testify. Always it has to be remembered that in policy and implementation the Soviet Union is a combination of two very strong strands, the great-power-chauvinism of Imperialist Russia and the complete unscrupulousness, the habitual mendacity of the Communist. Countries like our which suppose they can deal with the Soviet Union to their own advantage, or to the mutual advantage of the Soviet Union and themselves, generally have a very rude awakening. They find that ultimately all the advantage is to the Soviet Union, all the disadvantage to themselves. They are led up the garden path most effectively and when the time is ripe their

heads are banged with a resounding crack against the wall. Wise the country then that has the good sense to appreciate this reality about the Soviet Union and keep away from it, however tempting the offers made to attract it into the Soviet net. Hardly anyone has a spoon long enough to enable him to sup safely with the Devil.

Soviet arms aid to Pakistan after most cordial and unflinching promises of friendship to India should have been enough to awaken the Government of India from its pleasant dreams of Indo-Soviet co-operation for India's benefit. On top of that comes this grisly murder of a whole nation. Will you still continue to work with the Soviet Union, to trust it, to allow it free entrance into your land and activities, to let its own low-priced propaganda invade your bookshops, its party-men and their fellow-travellers infiltrate your political parties, your civil services, your trade unions, your armed forces? From the time of Nehru, who said he had left a portion of his heart behind when returning to his native land from Russia, and his principal aide the Crypto-Communist, Soviet-embracing propagandist for Russia, Krishna Menon, the Indian Government has always had a marked tenderness and partiality for the Soviet Government. The latest example is the refusal by a Government of India with at its head Nehru's daughter to condemn even the commission of that most heinous of all crimes, the Murder of a Nation.

* * * *

THE PUBLIC VOICE

"Well, this morning, I trust, Sir" said the slim, sharp-featured economic journalist to the fierce-whiskered, khadi-clad old gentleman, as they both got into the 106 bus that had just come to the Hanging Garden terminal. Carefully taking a window place on the sheltered side, the old gentleman patted the vacant half of the seat as a sign to his companion to sit beside him, and then abruptly fired off, "Who is this Chindi? I've never heard of him before". "Chindi, Chindi, why nor have I", said the journalist "in what connection did you come across the name?" "And you call yourself up-to-date! Don't you even know Chindi, who they say is to be Chairman of Hindustan Steel?" "Oh, you mean Chandy. Yes I know him and I know of nothing about him that fits him for that post," said the journalist. "If they do appoint him, it will be at least as wicked a job as was Malavivya's recent Chairmanship." "Come, tell me about him. What is his past?" "Well, he was an employee of Hindustan Levers, the people who make coap and dalda and such consumer goods, you know, became a Director—directors in such firms are just employees under orders from the parent companies, whose heads take the really important decisions—, then went to Calcutta, was chief of the new school of business administration there, an all theory and head-in-the-air institution, competent sources tell me, full of the usual management jargon and little more, and suddenly blossomed forth as Chairman of the Food Corporation of India, a Food Ministry

organisation. Has resigned from that recently, having, in spite of the excellent harvest, failed to procure even the very reasonable amounts expected, and having blamed for his own failure his subordinates. That's Chandy." "Well then explain why this—you can fill in the blank—is being chosen for our most important steel job. Has Indira, never very wise alas, gone completely hay-wire now?" "You ask difficult questions, how can I look into the mind or heart of the Prime Minister and tell you what makes her do such an obviously odd thing? My guess would be the reason is the same as in Malaviya's case, to please Kosygin and Co. Ideologically Chandy too is very close to the Moscow Communists, I've heard, and what with Soviet expert teams wandering all over the country and our economy being aimed at intimate co-ordination with the Soviet Union's, Kosygin and Co. may well have dropped a very broad hint that unless truly friendly and co-operative souls were in control of very important public sector projects, they could not but be displeased. So there you are. If Malaviyaji, why not Chandyji?" "But this is frightful," cried the old gentleman. "Is this our country or the God-forsaken Russians'?" "The country seems yours all right, but the Government, who can tell, unduly influenced, shall we say, by the very modern, expert and manipulative Soviet Communist. Do sympathise with good Indira a little, though. What can the poor woman do? Living with her wellintentioned but ill-doing, extremely-harmful-to-national-interest, judging-by-the-surface, father, she has grown to like the flashy, the meretricious, the 'Progressive'. All her close friends are of this type."

* * * *

Nobody is sure where the Prime Minister stands *vis-a-vis* the Communists. When Congress President she had them thrown out of power in Kerala. But now she is said to maintain close personal touch with Namboodripad and Bengal's Jyoti Basu, and she is constantly consulting the Communist leaders of all sections in Parliament. Does it matter to her if the Communists do well in the next elections or will she welcome their success and move over to be their leader, taking with her the fellow-travellers who have already infiltrated in the Congress and some of whom are calling loudly even now for an immediate coalition between the Congress, the Right Communists, and the S.S.P. Many who know her well personally assert emphatically that she is a decent, kindly human being, and it is very unlikely that any such person would want to subject her own land to the totalitarian slavery, which she knows well, a Communist regime, whatever its complexion, would impose. Would the bait of leadership, on the other hand, be irresistible to her, and would she willingly fill the role of the Ajoy Mukerji of India? The absence of a clear statement from her on this crucial matter serves very well the Communist interest, for it enables the Communists in private to claim her as one of them, while at the same time depressing greatly both proper non-Communist Congressmen and the non-Communists in opposition. To her it might be said 'Dear Madam,

there is a time for silence and a time for speaking, and in this matter more and more is silence being taken to mean consent on the wrong side. Speak up then, make your position unequivocally clear, and it may well be your people will, in spite of the Communist's recent successes and very clever underground work, also heartily disapprove of them.

This, then, is the broad picture today. The Communist, victorious at home in two states, conscious of the great power of his foreign god-fathers, Soviet and Chinese, to be exerted on his behalf, is confident as never before. His deceptive capacity, his ability to twist and turn and creep and crawl, is at its highest. Ordinary folk, who knew him well for what he was few years ago, basically a conspirator, totally oblivious of the difference between good and evil, working twenty-four hours a day to make of this country a slave state completely devoid of all our usual freedoms, a vicious and determined enemy of everything free men value, seem to have become bewildered by the soft approach he has put forward in the last few years and the tendency of our Government to rely on his patrons abroad, taking their promises seriously. Even the recent heart-rending happenings in Czechoslovakia do not seem to have aroused them to a consciousness of what the Communist yoke really means. If conditions continue as at present, the people remaining passive as regards the Communist, the intellectuals acquiescent, the Government weak-willed and living from day to day, the future for this country is undoubtedly dark. The time for choice is not later, it is today. Recognise the Communist for what he is, the greatest danger to India's freedom, internal and external, and for your own and your children's sake, deal with him accordingly.

* * * *

BENGAL AND INDIRA

Violence in Bengal has become so common that it no longer seems to merit even striking headlines in the newspapers. Three, six, eight ordinary citizens wounded or killed every day, policemen, officials, dignitaries, stabbed, bombed, butchered in the public streets or in their own houses, has become daily routine. The news item, not too prominent, is just glanced at by the newspaper reader in other parts of the country, with at most a sigh and an 'Oh Calcutta or Tch Bengal', instead of the burning indignation of earlier days.

There could perhaps be no greater tribute than this to the over-all managing skill of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. She has reduced in the public mind the outrageously horrible to the utterly commonplace. Directly responsible for the government of Bengal, she has failed so completely in the most elementary duty of any government anywhere, the maintenance of law and order, that her regime may rightly be called 'The intentional Mis-government of Bengal'. At tremendous cost to the people, not only of Bengal, but of the country as a whole since Bengal's

(Continued on Cover III)

POEMS

I AM TELLING YOU

The skies are shrouded this evening, the rains have come, storms sweep through scorched fields. I tell you I am amazed at the compassion of the clouds.

I tell you there is both terror and beauty in the colours of the setting sun. They excite the waves within me and I hear them lashing against the shores of my heart.

I tell you I love to watch nebulae on secret nights. The strange glowing dark amazes me and calls me to that unknown island where many forests lurk behind the shadows.

Since I was born I have often been amazed. And I have wondered how strange life is.

Yet I tell you no one has amazed me as much as that man. Who cries when he hears of someone else's home burning. Who raises his fists in mute protest for those he does not even know.

I tell you : those storms and these seas, that island and those dark forests, the terrible beauty of the sunset that I have seen in his eyes I have never seen before.

THE DANCING TREE

In moments of meditation, in moments of peace, he is with me even in my moments of pain. He incites me to struggle, he leads the river of my life :

he is the tree that dances and yet stands still.

In a single point of origin he has captured the entire world : all the waters of the seas, all the love that we share. And despair : the despair of eternal nights in sleepless eyes.

I cannot question why this happened and how, or why this should be possible at all. Though there be defiance, I cannot dare. Nor can this point, the earth, these waters, our love, this night. Only he who has created all this can dare defy them.

And that is why I often speak of that point and the tree that danced and yet stood still. I do not speak of this earth, these waters of the seas, or love. I do not speak of my despair.

And he who could have inspired courage, the foolish arrogant hero of this transient play, has turned to prayer. He awakes suffering and peace within me.

And all your fury is in vain.

(Poems by Lokenath Bhattacharya, translated from Bengali by Pritish Nandy.)

BEGGARS OF BOMBAY

S. B. BABA

IT needs a certain amount of cultivated callousness to be able to look upon Bombay's vast and omnipresent army of beggars. If you can, and in most cases you are forced to, look at them not as human beings like yourself (only more trodden upon, more unfortunate) but as pests and nuisances, you are amazed at the discoveries you make regarding these 'unfortunate' beings. It dawns on you that unfortunate they surely are, since to live in a society that makes any human being want to beg is certainly a misfortune, but their other misfortunes, sometimes God-given, sometimes self-induced and sometimes inflicted by others in childhood are now their assets.

Take the simple case of children. Beggars have children. Now, it is a simple matter to prevent them; the Law can do it, the Social Welfare Services can do it, the Beggar Homes can do it. But the children are an asset to their parents. One gives more readily to a woman carrying a small, dirty, hungry-looking child (she has probably hired one by the hour). One gives even more readily to a child itself. One day in the train a man told a child beggar, to get rid of it, "I'll give you 25 paise if you can change a tenner". Sure enough the child came up with the change.

A friend once found three beggars gambling. He stopped and asked them how they could afford it. One of them said, "Arre sahib, this is just a matter of two or three rupees! The fun is worth it." He was cagey upon being asked how much he makes a day, but agreed, rather contemptuously, to a round sum of Rs. 10.

A hefty woman, about twenty pounds overweight, whom I met during my daily commuting, leading two blind men, collected between Bandra and Mahim, at least one rupee from scrawny, underfed, anaemic, tired women who were foolish enough to actually work for a whole day to earn what the beggar did in ten minutes. I asked her if she were leading her husband and brother, who had been blinded through some accident. She settled herself on the floor and bringing out a piece of betelnut, said indifferently, "Nah! They don't belong to me. They came to my lot today." This same strange pronouncement I was to hear again from an oldish man leading an absolutely decrepit crone, almost dead. Obviously there is a centralised control which assigns beggars to a defined area, gives them their accessories (such as other blind, crippled or idiot beggars, or children), sends out those only slightly damaged, on their own. It is pathetic to see a small child, palm open before you saying mechanically, "Ma . . . Ma . . ." while it is not even glancing at you but watching the fascinating world pass by out of the window. You meet the same ones

on the same trains or at the same spots at the same time every day for about a week. Then they switch. It's all very methodical. A certain percentage to the police, a certain to the railway authorities, a certain to the beggars themselves, plus "protection", and the central authority makes a handsome profit.

There are two beggar-homes in the city and half a dozen in all in the State, with a total capacity of over three thousand. The beggar-homes are overflowing and several times the number inside are prowling the streets. In a beggar-home they teach a beggar a trade that will bring him at the end of a hard, rigorous day (ruled by the boss), perhaps a fraction of what he can make just roaming the street at whatever hour he wants for however long he wants. In the Homes they are treated for whatever diseases they are suffering from, and are given food and sufficient food to eat. Most of the beggars serve their terms, do not learn any trade, and return to begging until the next time they are caught and sent back. The rate of return is tremendous and very few find it worth their while to pay any attention to what is taught. As a beggar a man can do as he pleases provided he gives the fixed amount to his 'dada'. Playing truant one rare day from my own dreary pursuit of bread (merely to complete some other work!) I saw all these familiar beggars fast asleep in the afternoons; on platforms, in the shade of trees, huddling under empty stalls, inside large and cool water pipes.

I am not suggesting that these beggars are happy, but look at it this way: one of them gets fed up of begging, learns a trade, starts working at it. He is now obliged to have a home, work regular hours, eat a certain kind of food, wear passably clean and fairly untattered clothes. Most of this will reduce his already meagre income to nothing. He will have no time to sit around and gamble, to sleep in the afternoon, to wander on the roads. Neither will he have any of the comforts of our middle class homes. If he does not mind dirt, rags and any kind of filth for food—he will do better as a beggar; why should he bother to be anything else?

This is not to deny that there is the small number of real sufferers, who has no means other than charity. These too, I have often seen taking advantage of this streamlined system and be none the worse off.

All the religions of the world, and all the parents of children have taught us that charity, giving, sharing, is the greatest of virtues. This is so ingrained, that a man like a friend's father who used to stand firm and terrible before a beggar and declare in stentorian tones so the whole street could hear, "I do not believe in individual charity to beggars. I give to the beggar homes, to the orphanage. You can come to either with me and I'll pay for one meal there. Or you can come and weed my garden and I'll pay you a rupee for the day," used to be a sore embarrassment to all of us. We did note however, that none of the beggars accepted either of his offers. Even now, when I have accepted the truth of his saying my hand goes to my pocket when a blind man or an old man or a small child puts out his hand for alms. The millions who have never thought about whether it is right to be charitable in all circumstances,

mechanically and indifferently continue to give on an average ten paise a day at least to this beggar or that.

Suppose we all stopped giving anything to beggars, then what? Then perhaps they won't ask us for ten paise as we come out of our offices; back bent, eyes myopic with work, shoulders aching, arches fallen. They will simply attack us and take all that we have. We had better work a little harder to support them because, as one smart, English-speaking beggar told me at the bus stop one day, "Society is responsible for the state I am in and I will make society pay for it".

Until the whole "society" with its whole machinery: law, education, propaganda, alternative schemes can move in onto the problem, there is hardly anything one or two persons can do, except courageously refuse to give to swarms of yelling, whining, singing, smelling, diseased beggars; and send a sum to an institution if one feels one has enough to share.

Bombay's beggars cannot be called a problem any more. They must be treated as an industry. An entrepreneur's bold venture into new areas of demand—the demand for an easy access to collecting "punya" in heaven. He supplies those who will gain for you the "punya". After all it is easier to dip into your pocket for two paise than to give serious and constructive thought to what to do about these beggars and to go about doing something. The harder you find it to spare those two paise, the more potent your "punya". Or perhaps you do it just to get rid of that horrible noise, that horrible sight of a human being who has made capital out of his running wounds, sores, sightlessness, stumps of legs or arms, or small babies.* You simply want to be minimally aware of those to whom all this is natural: whining, touching others' feet, exposing their most gruesome and shameful ills.

Piety, indifference and escapism have not led anyone anywhere except into trouble. And this kind of trouble, as anyone knows, who has lived in or visited Bombay over a decade, does not decrease by itself; it needs active eradication, though to expect *activity* in any sphere here is to be much more optimistic than four futile five-year plans have given one any right to be.

* There was one woman who, in order to show everyone that she had only a finger growing out of her shoulder where an arm should be, had cut off half of her blouse. She was an otherwise healthy woman only lacking one arm. Also in exposing that arm she had managed to exhibit nearly all of one breast. She stuck to the men's compartment to see if some other trade could also be drummed up on the side. The blind, the old, and the small children specialise in women's compartments, the lepers outside cinema houses, and the very feeble and ragged and also small children outside hotels.

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VISTAS

There was no swagger about his gait
but the crouch had gone.
After all, his name had been lengthened
by two capital letters—B.A.
And what with a black gown and a degree
and a photograph he discovered
he had a "personality"!

He had finished with nibbling on Keats
and Diminishing Marginal Returns
Merits of the Parliamentary system
vis a vis the Presidential system
and Lord be praised for Guide Books, he had passed

The world welcomed him with open arms
The choice before him was boundless as space
He could become a Records Clerk
smelling of case law and musty paper
or a reference Clerk

or an Upper Division Clerk
or (God firbid) a Lower Division Clerk
or a Files Clerk dealing with
minutes and memoranda

Turn a typist or a Stenographer
(Good grief! Another year at Pitman!)
or a Despatcher—lac and candlestick
gum and glue and rubber stamp!

He could go into Audit, and exchange
this brown cocoon of cadecs and files
for a world of ledgers and double keys
cash and service stamps

halt people at Efficiency Bars
gazette and de-gazette officers
fix transfers inter alia
with endorsements inter se
handle pension papers—"May I have
that statement, if you please,
signed by a magistrate
certifying you are alive!"

Or he could turn a scribe
sitting near the Law Courts
and draft nasty complaints
anonymous complaints
against police officials
and tout on the sly
for that old friend of his
that up-and-coming lawyer
who had married the daughter
of the Sessions Judge!

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RETURN TO GOOD HUSBANDRY

A. RAMSAY TAINSH

FARMERS and scientists have recently been meeting at Oxford to comment on an official publication, "Modern Farming and the Soil", H.M. 80, price: £2-2-0.

The book deals with a major man-made disaster in the Midlands and Wales, where about 100,000 hectares of once highly productive land have gone out of cultivation.

Modern farming has become an agro-industry, in which the scientist, engineer and technician, along with the urban economist, play the top roles. The farmer has been taxed and subsidized in such a way that he has had either to comply with the Government policy or get out of business. Some very able farmers who read the writing on the wall sold their farms while prices were high and have re-established themselves in Portugal.

The problem has arisen because the policy of the post-war Governments has been to close their eyes to the waste of harvested grain at home and abroad.

During the war years grain was stored in any building available, and as a result storage pests and damp caused greater losses than enemy action. After the war it was fallaciously assumed that there was a world shortage of grain and the Government must continue to cultivate heavy clay lands which had been under grass. The manufacturers of chemical fertilizers, weedicides, pesticides, tractors and agricultural machines welcomed this policy and encouraged the Government subsidies paid to keep heavy clay land year after year under grain.

Yields were good, and all went well until the very wet years of 1968 and 1969. In 1969, when the heavy tractors tried to plough the water-logged fields, the soil structure collapsed. The soil was compacted, as the weight of the heavy machines squeezed out the air and water from between the crumb and the soil particles. An impervious layer was formed. The rain-water could no longer drain away and the useful soil-animals, bacteria and fungi suffocated. To make matters worse the anaerobic fungi and bacteria became active and rotted the organic matter in the soil, releasing not carbon dioxide but sulphuretted hydrogen, which is poisonous to useful soil-animals and plants.

The farmers and scientists at Oxford are not recommending more science, engineering and technology, but those two almost forgotten concepts, good house-keeping and good husbandry.

The situation is by no means hopeless, because in times of disaster common sense has a way of coming to the fore and the means of correcting past mistakes are well known and available.

Two thousand years before the pyramids were built the peoples of southern England were growing grain, marling and liming their land and rotating their wheat and barley with grass lays. They had also discovered the art of drying their grain and storing it in vast underground granaries in the chalk downs and in pits in their hill-forts. These vast stocks of grain enabled the tribal leaders to assemble the great work forces needed to build Stonehenge and other monumental works.

The Romans admired the British farmers and wrote about their ways. They also introduced the hot-air drying of grain, but did not, apparently, use the local air-tight storage because they exported all surplus grain to the continent to feed their armies. With the departure of the Romans agriculture declined. It was not revived until the beginning of the 18th century when it became fashionable to study the natural sciences. By 1730 landowners were draining their land and planting wind-breaks and hedges. They improved their stock by selective breeding and heavily manured their land. Improvement was rapid and food became plentiful. During the next century the fashion changed to chemistry, and landowners were looking round to find new means of building up the topsoil. In 1830 John Bennet Lawes in Rothamstead was wondering why bone-meal was a useful fertilizer in one field and not in another. He asked a chemist, who told him that if he dissolved the bones in sulphuric acid they would fertilize every field equally well. In the meantime in Germany, Justus von Liebig was working on the chemicals in plants. He came to the conclusion that as one ton of manure contained about 12 kilos of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium and magnesium, it would be far quicker and cheaper to put chemicals on the soil than manure.

In 1842 Lawes took out a patent on a method whereby sulphuric acid was used to treat calcium phosphate rock and the resulting superphosphate was sold as a fertilizer. These two men had a profound effect on the economy of the world. By 1880 the chemists believed that they knew all there was to know about plant growth, and scientists, engineers and technicians began to develop ways and means of increasing production and reducing the labour required on the land.

Agro-engineering received great encouragement during the first World War, as the Government decided to plough up the heavy clay soils of the Midlands and Wales and grow wheat. This was possible with the help of the tractor, which began to replace the horse and free farm labour for other work. As the land had been well drained and heavily manured for 150 years the crops were excellent. But in the 1920's the Government withdrew its farm subsidies and the clay lands tumbled back to grass. Money was scarce and farmers could not afford to maintain their drains. During the Second World War the land was again put under grain and remained so until the soil, starved of animal manure, collapsed under the weight of the heavy machines. Now the farmers and scientists are again saying that the health and prosperity of the nation depend on agriculture. But successful agriculture depends on the quality and the aeration and drainage of the subsoil. If this foundation is weak, British farming will

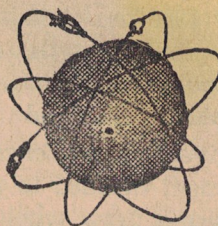
collapse and with it the whole social and economic structure of the nation.

There is today a shortage of skilled labour on the land and growing unemployment and discontent in the towns. The professional students, with their fine degrees in sociology are being shunned by employers, and Ph.D.s are considered too narrow in their outlook for carrying out commercial research.

Mr. Heath, the Prime Minister, and Mr. Douglas Houghton, Chairman of the Labour Party, may soon be sending the youth back to the land to drain the fields and help earn their daily bread.

[In a covering letter, Mr. Tainsh says "the world has at last begun to realise that any apparent shortage of grain depends on the human factor. More attention is being paid to better storage. Large air-tight bins are being marketed. Chemical fertilizers are dangerous on the dry light soils of North India. They can also be dangerous on the heavy clay soils of England."—Ed.]

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AN ELECTION MESSAGE FOR Z

SORAB P. PATUCK

OCCASIONALLY, some trifling thing you see can take a violent hold on your mind. Almost certainly the man on the Deccan Queen, seated across the aisle from me and by the window, was one of those people I call foreign Indians: prosperous and possibly well-educated. This specimen was, or could well have been, an Indian merchant from Hong Kong on a business tour of some of our cities. And he had perhaps kept a couple of days free in his schedule to visit relations in Poona.

He was wearing a bright yellow silk shirt (real silk) and a tie which was so unobtrusively excellent that it must have cost a packet even in Hong Kong. I was quietly but happily sizing him up through half-closed eyes, when I saw a slight twitching at the left corner of his mouth. It fascinated me. It was so slight that most people ordinarily would never have noticed it. And it was regular. In fact I timed it over a three minute period; twenty seven twitches, or one every seven seconds. He kept at it even while he drank tea and ate the toast that's served on the Deccan Queen. I wondered, did he keep it up while he slept. Amazing.

And then a still more amazing thing happened. This person in the yellow shirt faded away. Not really, of course; he must still have been there in the flesh, seated by the window and consuming tea and toast. What I mean when I say that he faded away, is that for me, in that seat by the window, as real as life, smiling, almost laughing straight at me, was someone else.

It's uncanny, the tricks one's mind can play, if you give it a free hand and specially if the occasion is suitable. You must of course understand that this is sheer imagination, but for me at the time it was almost more real than reality itself. I won't mention his name. I don't think it would be right to do so. Also, it's not at all pertinent to what I want to say. I'll call him Z.

Z and I used to meet each other in the 1930s, when we were at university. We were at different universities and so we only met when our visits to London coincided; as they did, I suppose, nine, possibly a dozen times in all. We usually put up at the same digs and quite often we'd spend the evening together. We'd go to a concert, perhaps, and then a meal at a nearby Chinese restaurant. But naturally that's not my reason for calling him Z.

The real reason is that Z is supposed to be someone rather important in our country. Yet not having seen him since our London days, I cannot say what truth there is to it. However, I can vouch for this, that many people, who are in the know about such matters have, emphatically but

off the record, asserted that Z is right now the *eminence gris* of India. I must admit that equally strong or authoritative rumour has it that X, or Y, is the real power behind the Indian throne, which is what *eminence gris* means: the quiet voice that gets heard in the place where power rests.

"Well, hello, there. If it isn't so and so." That used to be a way with him in the thirties, and apparently he still called nearly everyone, so and so. "Come and sit here, and tell me how things are." And he popped his pipe back in between his lips.

Even in the old days, he always seemed to have a pipe in his left hand when he was talking. And then when he placed it back in his mouth, it was a sort of signal between us and I knew he was waiting for me to say what he best liked to hear from me. He used to love talk about politics and politicians, specially abusive and scandalous items. But just then I had another idea.

Somehow, our not having met over the last thirty or forty years didn't seem to make any difference. Even though both of us had naturally changed a lot there still was absolutely no need between us for the usual small talk, preliminaries and so on.

For a few years, may be, I have had a dull but growing and oppressive feeling. Well, if it comes to that, who hasn't, in India, or in many other places? But I had never thought of putting this into words, presumably because I could see no purpose in doing so. But now I found myself opening up about it to Z. I think I'll try and reproduce our conversation to the best of my ability in the actual words we spoke. I sought to describe the mood of the people I knew.

"Basically a despair, a dull and rather dead lack of confidence. A feeling that all we do, or can now do, is to fumble about as best we can and leave it at that. Oh, it's all so pointless. Just to jog along, until death or some catastrophe claims us.

"Until recently there had been a sense of tenseness. Oh, very mild and vague, but quite a widespread idea that something or other was being done and that we'd manage to pull through. Even among the people who live near me, many of them have, or had, this awareness. Less than a couple of years ago, I had stopped on my evening stroll for a chat with a man bringing the cattle in from the forest, and I'd ambled back to the village with him. I remember his telling me that he thought there was a big sort of cloud over everywhere and that in that cloud there was a terribly important and urgent message for everyone. He had said that he was only an ignorant villager, but would I tell him what that message was. And could I also tell him that the something else that he felt was not really so. He said that he also felt that people who could do things were too busy and were neglecting this message."

As I finished saying those words, I noticed Z purse his lips and I wondered whether I had made a mistake. Perhaps I should have con-

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tented myself and said a few cutting things about my pet political aversions. But Z's smile returned and he removed his pipe to say, "So you have bothered to put this message into words because you feel I can do something about it?"

I knew he had me there, so I said, "Obviously."

"Now that was all highly eloquent and so on, but let's see, what, precisely, was this terribly important and frightfully urgent message hanging over the nation like a dark cloud?"

I was ready for that, and said, "Good government."

"Good Heavens. Don't you think we're doing our best? Oh, very well. All you have to do is to look at me with that quizzical expression. We are nowhere near doing our best. And even if we were doing our best, our best would not be near good enough. I know that, only too well, I assure you. There's little room for illusions about our people in power and who hold on to power. But tell me, since you mentioned it, what precisely do you mean by good government, or even by the best that the present lot in power can do?"

I hesitated.

"Go on," he said. "I'm asking for it."

Right away, I couldn't say a thing. I knew that this was a good opportunity. Strangely enough, I felt that Z thought so too and he helped me along until I could get myself organized.

"We're at another of those turning points, what with this snap election and all that. But look at it the other way around. What is the best the voters can do? To educate the voters is all very well in theory, in the long run and so on. But right here and now? See here, you so and so, why not stick to educating the few people who hold power? I'd like you to. I'm really asking for it." And the pipe popped back into his mouth.

I still hadn't a clear notion of what I was going to say, but I felt grand, and I knew that somehow I'd be able to get it across to him.

"The very best that you can do under present circumstances is probably also the easiest and simplest. By you, of course, I mean those who happen to be in power." I paused, I expect so as to give importance to what I was about to say. But it was a mistake.

Z removed the pipe from his mouth long enough to ask and answer: "Forget politics? You can't."

Fortunately, I realized that if that was really so, then we were lost: that nothing mattered, and nor could it, if the politics we had in India now, the utter chaos, and confusion and futility of it, if we couldn't push it all to one side and just ignore or forget it. And so, despite that depressing four word question and answer, "forget politics? you can't," I assumed we could and I went on from there.

"Let me put it this way. With these elections over by about next mid-March, the 520 or so members of the new Lok Sabha, after thinking it over, decide to pick one person who is suitably qualified by experience, education, personality, and then simply hand over to him the job of running the country, of managing the affairs of the nation; good government, law and order, the honouring of contracts and so on. This person to be given an entirely free hand, well almost entirely, subject to a few reasonable safeguards."

Z waited to see if I had finished, before he removed the pipe from his lips. "That sounds a little like abdication. But I don't think you mean that, nor that it need be so. Would you care to elaborate what you called reasonable safeguards; one or two of them?"

"A contract. Reporting back. Overall supervision, supervisory control by a small team of the Lok Sabha. Call it a Cabinet of three, or at the most, five ministers. Another safeguard: the person would be on a fixed fee contract or agreement for, say, three years. He would be stripped of whatever personal property and wealth he had and this would be returned to him at the end of his job. He would also undertake not to benefit indirectly by favouring his relations and cronies and so on. I know this sounds a ridiculous assumption, but I don't think it is a difficult thing to find a man you can trust for such a job."

Z said, "I agree with that."

"Then?"

"You know, so and so, I agree with what you have just said far more than you may suspect. It is the easiest and the best possible thing that we can do. It is easy to find a person who is suitable for the job and it's child's play to keep him financially straight even if he tries to be tricky. Incidentally, I don't think there's much chance of anyone in such a position ever wanting to do that. Most people, mistakenly perhaps, would give their eye-teeth for such a chance to run their nation. I know I would, but thank God I obviously lack the requisite experience."

"What's more, the thing is not at all as ridiculous or absurd as many would like to make out it is. In fact, as you probably know, it's a technique which is as old as the hills, and older than some hills. For instance, the Ancient Romans used to do it. The snag, and there's only one snag but it looks decisive; the snag is that we, the modern Indians, can't do it. It's our politicians again. Someone has been careless and forgotten about their education. In education, we modern Indian politicians are still far behind the Ancient Romans."

"I don't think it is as bad as all that."

"I know it is. Let's be practical. Even if they decided to implement your, or this Roman proposal, they would only go and appoint one of themselves for the job, and then we'd really be in a pickle. No. All things considered. . . . Any way, go on with what you were saying. Sup-

pose the miracle happens and the Lok Sabha does something as simple and as decent as that, who would you pick for such a job?"

"There's the world to choose from, but we can find quite a good short list from the five or six hundred millions of our own people."

"Can you visualize what would happen if I walked into a Cabinet Meeting, locked the door, and presented them with a short list, and suggested that they abdicate their powers to someone on that list? Incidentally, I happen, physically, to be in a position where I could do that sort of thing."

I had to smile at this, and replied: "I expect they'd stare at you, and after an interval, someone might suggest that you needed a holiday or a promotion."

"If they did that, I'd be lucky. But just imagine the reaction of the new Lok Sabha, if they suddenly found themselves in that sort of a plight."

It was just then that I realized that the Deccan Queen had reached my destination. The man in the yellow shirt was still in the window seat, and the left corner of his lips was twitching away, imperceptibly but still, I expect, at a rate of about once every seven seconds.

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MOVEMENTS

*Struck sword sparks against sword,
Arrow-head meets arrow-head
Bang on in mid-air :*

*(Sound warring against sound, headstrong iron
Grinding against equally headstrong iron,
Flame-jets shooting taller than any burning pine). Then,*

*An n-bomb streaks down the depths
And grabs up by the scruff of its neck
The shrieking body of the shivering seven-seas.*

*A strong wish soon scrummages deep
In a hole in Earth
And tears the magnetic heart out :*

*(The urgent rhythm
Convincing the doubting thomases
Of the truth of the heart).*

*A throat spits out a cry to the leagues
And a thousand viking ships cleave
The unruly waves of the north. South,*

*The blood curdling tom-toms are smacked in Congo
And a hundred thousand black wings fan out
To block off the torrid Sun. Hence,*

*The mind's right arm sinks
A million million weeks ahead
And drags the future out to living light,*

*Its left goes harpooning at the back
And piles up on the Globe's staggering deck
The weight of the White Whale, complete with tail and head.*

SITUATION

The kite flaunts his dusky beauty
 On the blindingly snow-white parapet
 And off he goes tauntingly, the thermal to explore—
 A tail-coated dracula, guaranteed his freedom to explore.

The wool of words I toss out-doors, too
 Balls about in the winding lane below,
 And is expectedly lost to view
 Down some hole of doubt.

Deep, deep the sighs that escape my lips hourly ;
 Kin to laughing gas, all bound as though
 For the wastes of shame.
 Hourly the warm duct's crocodiles will flow.

Then damn the song-grub in the ear that,
 Still obsessively so, craves to put out
 Gold embossed wings of silk ; O woe
 The way the witless lungs will boo hoo,

Hoping against blind hope to blow
 The breath of lusty life on stones and rubbish
 That as yet have no
 Proud face to boast.

'Manna fall,' piously thus
 The tongue mamma's its pet thought
 In private audience
 Before a very jealous Head.

Know ye all, too,
 By the sluggish python of the unending gutters
 We home—me and my pigeons ; my need for the unflawed
 Great quiet of the deaf mute grave.

But securely caught in the mechanics
 Of creaturely laws the feet still obediently lift
 By these same soft dust brown paths
 Year in, year out.

Sires, most high tension wires
 Let us in on how you range in power
 Tower to tall tantalus tower,
 Winking fire fire fire ?

Keshav Malik

OUR DECLINE

A. G. NOORANI

WE have entered the Seventies with a marked feeling that our fortunes have declined in the last decade, both, in our domestic affairs and internationally. We feel less assured ; but this does not make us any the more introspective, only the more noisy. Amongst ourselves, our quarrels have increased and intensified at all levels—Centre-State, regional and communal. In our relations with the rest of the world, we are struggling to hide the fact even from our conscious selves that we no longer count as much in the councils of the nations as we once did.

Mr. Kuldip Nayar's book *India : The Critical Years* (Vikas ; Rs. 20) is about these wasted sixties. It does not purport to be either a chronicle or a definitive analysis. But it imparts information and analysis useful for both. His credentials are impeccable : Information Officer attached to the Union Home Ministry under Pandit Pant and Mr. Shastri, Editor and Manager of the UNI from 1964 to 1967 and, since, the Resident Editor of *The Statesman*. He tells a lot we did not know before and has brought to light many a document of public importance—the diary of Mr. S. Nijalingappa, the report of Lt. General Harbaksh Singh, Army Commander in-charge of operations in the Western War with Pakistan, the CBI report on the inflow of foreign money during the 1967 General Elections and the Cabinet award on the Maharashtra-Mysore border dispute, to cite some.

Beyond a doubt the most important event of the Sixties in the domestic sphere was the break up of the Congress Party. Mr. Kuldip Nayar's narrative is scrupulously fair. He spares neither the Old Guard for their intrigues nor Mrs. Gandhi and her advisers for their unscrupulous tactics. It was a complex situation. Doubtless, there *were* genuine policy differences between the two sides. But, in the good Indian manner, there was not a single resignation from Mrs. Gandhi's Cabinet till the split because of policy differences. Mr. Asoka Mehta and Mr. M. C. Chagla merely seized issues that came their way to beat a retreat long after they had fallen from grace. The precipitating factor in the Great Split was power though both sides chose to give it an ideological rationale.

Mr. Nayar's detailed account of the deliberations in the rival camps on the eve of the split and the negotiations that went on between them makes this amply clear. "Mrs. Gandhi sat fiddling with a necklace of beads which a holy mother (*mata*) had given her to wear during days of crisis. She was peeved over the charge of indiscipline but was not against a compromise if her supremacy remained unchallenged. They must accept her leadership—and her infallibility.

"Strangely there was no talk of principles or ideologies or of the other side being retrograde and reactionary—a plank which Mrs. Gandhi had adopted to attack them. The crisis had now boiled down to withdrawal of the indiscipline charge against Mrs. Gandhi. All feared the consequences of an open split in the party." The precondition of withdrawal of charges before talks for a rapprochement was rejected by the Old Guard. The Congress Split.

Of course, a lot had happened before which had brought things to this pass. Mr. Nijalingappa's Presidential Address at the Faridabad Congress (May 1969), the Parliamentary Board's adoption of Mr. Sanjiva Reddi as its Presidential candidate and Mrs. Gandhi's effective sabotage of his candidature. "Never before had in India or elsewhere a Prime Minister worked so zealously against the candidate of the party which chose the Prime Minister.

"Her stakes were high. She feared—and correctly—that she would be thrown out after Reddy was elected. The Syndicate's supporters were saying that openly now." Mrs. Gandhi's tactics were as audacious and unworthy as the stakes were high. She took Communist support, "the Syndicate now openly said that Mrs. Gandhi was a Communist and cited in support the way the Communists had rallied behind her. This angered her more and she hit back by saying that the doings of the party bosses had given the Communists a foothold in India.

"She was not wrong. The two States, Kerala and West Bengal, had slipped from the hands of the Congress party because the party bosses had backed the wrong candidates in the elections.

"In Kerala people were sick of 'the corrupt clique' in the Congress when it was in power. For months together, the people, particularly the youth, demanded the replacement of the Congress Chief Minister, Shankar, by a 'cleaner' person. But Kamraj backed Shankar because he was his protege. Many then left the Congress party and formed a parallel body.

"While Kamaraj's intransigence cost the Congress party Kerala at that time (March 1965), Atulya's cost the party West Bengal (March 1967)."

In the negotiations that went on, two of the highest offices in the land, the Presidency and the Prime Ministership were being freely offered as rewards for political support. "Desai was sounded to find out if he would agree to be the Congress party's candidate for Presidentship. When I broached the subject to him his reply was that he had already been approached and had said 'No'. 'She (Mrs. Gandhi) should be the President,' he said. Not that he thought she would make a better candidate—'there is no one in the country better than me to occupy this position', he said. But when he was helpless as No. 2 in Mrs. Gandhi's Cabinet, as President he would be even more so.

"I know that in the name of quelling internal disturbances I as President could assume executive powers, but to do so I would have to depend upon the armed forces. For some time the Defence Chiefs might

allow me to be President but one day one of them might himself like to occupy that position. Where will we go from there?" Desai asked." Constitutionally, Mr. Morarji Desai's notions about the President's powers are not sound. The President cannot act without the Cabinet's advice at all in the given situation.

If the Presidency was thus bandied about, so was the Premiership and the target for the offering darts was Mr. Y. B. Chavan. In this amoral atmosphere, victory went to the side which was bolder, more energetic, and hit lower.

A particularly disturbing aspect of our foreign policy in the Sixties was that we came to be so pitifully dependent on Russia. Under Mr. Nehru the pro-Soviet bias and the consequent distortions were there. Mr. Shastri tried to redress the balance but President Johnson's boorish behaviour gave him no chance. Under Mrs. Gandhi the process has accelerated sharply, to the detriment of the national interest and national prestige. Mr. Nayar lists the Soviet assurances to the contrary that preceded its perfidious arms deal with Pakistan.

"Unofficially, all Ministers were in favour of denouncing the Russian decision and supporting an Opposition resolution to condemn the arms supply. But Mrs. Gandhi pointed out that there was no Parliament resolution when the U.S. supplied arms to Pakistan. Swaran Singh, then Defence Minister, brought round all by arguing whether it was politic to condemn Russia when India was so dependent on it for arms, trade and heavy machinery."

The episodes of the Russian maps and of Radio Peace and Progress need no recalling. Russian interference in our internal affairs has increased. The incident about the Soviet Cultural Centre and its aftermath indicate that for every Soviet lapse the administration proposes to punish the Western countries.

Mr. Nayar reports on the draft bill to impose suitable restrictions on receipts of funds from abroad which Mrs. Gandhi was about to discuss with the Opposition just before the Lok Sabha was dissolved. It will affect the open, not the covert. Curiously in all the discussion on the subject none care to recall an institution known as the Soviet Peace Fund. It was established on April 27, 1961 and the details of its Constitution and objectives were given in an article in the periodical *Soviet Justice* (No. 9 of 1970) by A. Vsevolodov. "Its founders were the Soviet Committee for the Defence of Peace, the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the Soviet Committee for solidarity with the countries of Asia and Africa, the Committee of Soviet Women, the Soviet Committee of War Veterans, the Association for collaboration with the United Nations in the USSR and other communal organisations.

"The essence and the purpose of this organisation is set out in one of the basic Articles of the Statutes of the Fund—Part I, Art. 3. The

Soviet Peace Fund has the purpose of extending financial support to organisations and persons who set themselves the aim of assisting in the maintenance and strengthening of peace throughout the world, the promotion of friendship, mutual understanding and solidarity between the peoples, and universal and complete disarmament."

Dishonestly claiming that the Fund is made up of "voluntary contributions" from Russian citizens the writer adds, "Besides providing material aid to the people of Asia and Africa, the Soviet Peace Fund finances various Congresses, Forums, and Assemblies where there are established and developed links with foreign organisations and the peace loving policy of the USSR is popularised."

Mr. Nayar's reportage will be of great help to the historian of the future and so will his appraisals of the current situation to the student of public affairs.

Of the former, his account of the Tashkent negotiations is by far the most informative yet to appear. He reveals how President Ayub went back on his own draft and Mr. Bhutto was ticked off for lying by Mr. Gromyko. "Once it looked that even the Kashmir question could be settled at Tashkent itself. After the Declaration, Kosygin asked Shastri to solve the Kashmir issue as well. He agreed and talked to Lt. General Kumaramangalam, then India's Chief of the Army Staff designate. Shastri told Kosygin that India would be willing to make some adjustment in the cease-fire line and give some territory of the State to Pakistan. (Before leaving for Tashkent, Sadiq, the Chief Minister of Kashmir, had also requested Shastri to settle the Kashmir issue if possible.)

Kosygin conveyed Shastri's offer to Ayub. He did not reject it and said he would consider it and give his reply later. He never did."

Reportage is not all. Mr. Nayar never conceals his own opinions. They reveal a healthy liberal outlook and a deep commitment to the democratic process.

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AGENTS IN ALL PRINCIPAL PORTS OF THE WORLD

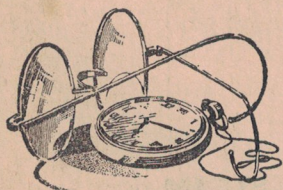
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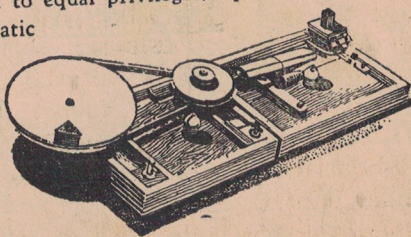
The street in the evening
 tilts homeward
 as traffic piles up.
 It is then I stir about :
 rise from the table
 and shake the dust from my eyes.
 Pick up my glasses
 and look
 for myself uneasily
 in every nook
 and corner of the night.
 The pavement turns informer
 hearing my steps.
 A pariah dog
 slams an alley on my face.
 I have exchanged the world
 for a table and chair.
 I shouldn't complain.

R. Parthasarathy

One nation: One people



"There is so much in common between people in the same State, under the same flag and owing undivided allegiance to it... that those who believe in India as a nation can have no minority or majority question. All are entitled to equal privileges, equal treatment... The state of our conception must be a secular, democratic state, having perfect harmony between different units."—Mahatma Gandhi

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VIEWS

N. A. Palkhivala: During 1955-56 to 1964-65 the average annual growth of real incomes—i.e. taking the national income at constant prices—was 40 per cent, while that of money supply was 7.1 per cent, revealing a gap of 3.1 per cent. By contrast, from 1964-65 to 1969-70 the average annual growth of real incomes was barely 0.8 per cent, while that of money supply was as high as 10.7 per cent, indicating an inflationary gap of 9.9 per cent. The national rate of savings has dropped to the alarming all-time low of 8 per cent. This is the result of the unshakable conviction of our Government that the right thing to do economically is the wrong thing to do politically. Inflation has reached the point where “to speculate is safe but to save is to gamble.” . . .

For a people whose national motto is “Truth shall prevail”, we do remarkably well in the way of propagating and swallowing falsehoods. Consider the oft repeated allegation that capital is on strike and large business houses are not willing to co-operate with the Government in developing the national economy. Facts are stubborn things, and the figures as disclosed by the Ministry for Industrial Development in the Rajya Sabha on 23rd November 1970 tell exactly the opposite story. As many as 444 applications for licences were received from large industrial houses between January and September 1970. Only three licences were granted, and letters of intent were issued in other three cases. 50 applications were rejected and the remaining 388 applications were “under consideration”. So far from capital being on strike, it has been struck,—struck repeated and swingeing blows in the name of outdated ideologies which have not the remotest relevance to the economic realities of the day. Between our licensing regulations and the provisions of the Monopolies Act, the inbuilt delays make eternity intelligible.

A Reader: Our Government makes a deal with *Novosti*, but even Icelandic Communists have attacked the *Novosti*, for its misreporting, specifically, of the reporting of the Leningrad hijacking trial and the death sentences that were imposed.

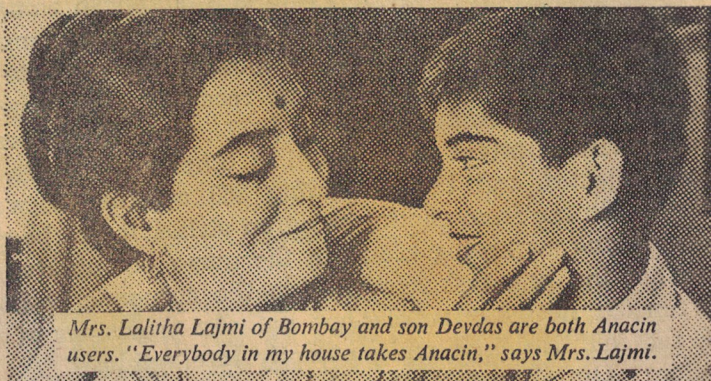
In a review on December 31, 1970, *Thjodviljinn*, daily newspaper of the Icelandic Labour Alliance (Communist Party), said that the *Novosti* report, which appeared the previous day, “surely does not aid the Soviet case. Instead of impartial reporting there is a flood of foul words about the accused and the whole story smells of primitive hate instead of an impartial stand by the reporter.”

The *Novosti* office in Iceland was opened in the Spring of 1970. Apart from *Thjodviljinn*, the Icelandic newspapers appear to regard its products with caution, and by October there were signs that even *Thjodviljinn*'s enthusiasm was on the wane. On October 7 Vesteinn Ludviksson, a member of *Thjodviljinn*'s editorial staff, contributed an article complaining about the amount of *Novosti* material that his newspaper used. Ludviksson commented: “The objective of *Novosti* is to create that picture of the Soviet Union and its history which is approved by the power elite in command in the Kremlin.”



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A-43

OPINION, February 23, 1971

*Listen, I'd like to tell you
there must be violence
between us—that alone
justifies, translates the breath
indrawn, havoc wasting such years
of richness.
That can reproach relentless
poverty, dull denial, daily
diminishing of world and rage.
So ask: unthinkable deeds
of compliance and connivance
endless pandering to bestial wants
lifelong orgies without dialogue
contorted couplings of prey and death.
Mere love is not enough.*

Gauri Deshpande

(Continued from Page 10)

industrial establishments and raw produce serve the whole country, she has kept the Communists happy. Their true representative, the egregious Dhavan, still continues her chosen and cherished Governor. To move him, to take the really stern measures demanded by the near-civil-war situation, would mean displeasing not only her Communist supporters here but also incurring the anger of the Soviet Communist leaders, and that to her is of course unthinkable. Even if all her other sins of commission and omission were forgiven Mrs. Indira Gandhi, her conscious mishandling of the Bengal situation alone is enough to damn her. That after it she should continue to be Prime Minister, is proof of the poor quality, lack of spirit and selfishness of so many of our legislators.

* * * *

What a picture emerges, even from these few instances! Indiraji is full of concern, of course, concern for herself, concern for her son, concern for the Soviet Union, concern for the Communists, concern for the crypto-Communists, concern for the Naxalites. All that is lacking is concern for India and the Indian people. The real interests of both she forgets. Our next Prime Minister, she? Only if we, the Indian people, are totally besotted, only if seeing our continuous folly the gods wish to destroy us.

OPINION

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